

the technical data needed to maintain and repair.

So what is this ship's mission and what does it contribute to national security? Nothing.

The Navy says it plans to use the LCS for partner engagement, as a replacement for obsolete minesweepers for long-range fire capability, and for counterdrug activities. But the LCS are not well-suited for minesweeping due to their lack of endurance, and their already years-late mine countermeasure package isn't even operational.

Our top priority in national defense strategy is China and Russia. We can't waste scarce funds on costly LCS when there are more capable platforms like destroyers, attack submarines, and the new *Constellation*-class frigate. Most importantly, the cost of sustaining LCS isn't just felt in lost dollars, but lost lives.

The Navy has a severe undermanning problem. Our surface fleet is 15 percent undermanned compared to required levels for safe operation. The average sailor is overworked and gets 6 hours or less of sleep per night. A recent GAO report on pierside maintenance found undermanning was so bad on some ships that half of the electrician slots were empty. On others, the crew members had to work 80 to 100 hours per week to prepare to deploy.

On these ships, the operational tempo is so high, several sailors have left due to behavioral health needs. At least one has died from suicide. This is unacceptable, especially in the wake of the deadly *McCain* and *Fitzgerald* collisions that killed 17 sailors 5 years ago. The key contributors? Undermanning and fatigue.

We can and must prevent this. Let's decommission all nine ships.

GOD BLESS FIRST RESPONDERS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first responders in Uvalde. It has been 22 days since the terrible incident in Uvalde occurred, and many of the discussions have been about the victims. I will talk about some of the survivors. Some of those survivors are first responders.

In particular, one gentleman, Javier Martinez, is a lieutenant for the Uvalde Police Department. He was one of the first people on the scene. He engaged with the shooter. He was actually wounded. He goes in there and he clears the room.

But afterwards he wasn't done. There are a lot of copycat threats, and Javier Martinez, even though he was going through all that, went down to the high school, and he secured the high school. The next day, he was on duty.

He put his uniform on, and he went to work the next day and the next day.

There are many stories just like this. When the fire happened, everyone ran to the incident, and they didn't stop. Some of the law enforcement officers, Border Patrol agents, after they got done clearing that room, they went to other elementary schools. There are seven elementary schools in Uvalde. This happened days on.

I mention that because while the community of Uvalde, while my district is healing, there are all these heroes that are walking among us.

Another person I will mention is Ann. Ann is the director of the ER there in Uvalde. She helped save lives.

There are so many people that have just helped. After the cameras are gone, after everyone stops listening or even remembering what happened in Uvalde, we will be there as one community coming together.

Over a year ago, my community asked me for a mental health hospital. Last year, we secured \$2 million for that. When I hosted the President a couple weeks ago, we asked for \$23 million on that. Mental health is at the core of all of this. There is a mental health crisis not only in Uvalde, but I would argue across the country. We have to make sure that we are devoting the resources necessary to protect our children, to protect ourselves.

My whole community of Uvalde, I would argue, needs mental health assistance right now. A lot of us are getting that. My own staff, essentially, we turned into a FEMA office, and we were dealing with all these crises.

Someone reminded me yesterday that I essentially have relived this crisis 22 days now. A lot of us are in that exact same boat. I mention that to say, we have to get rid of this stigma behind mental health. We have to realize all of us, from a young age to an old age, go through things in life, and we need mental health professionals in order to get through that.

Today, I thank all the first responders in Uvalde for everything they are doing, the men and women, just like Javier Martinez, who put their uniform on, go to work. There are heroes walking among us that sometimes get forgotten. They are not forgotten today nor every other day. God bless them.

RECOGNIZING OAK HILL CHARTER SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate the staff, volunteers, and board members of Oak Hill Charter School in Caldwell County, North Carolina.

The school was unanimously approved by the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board, and its doors will officially open this August.

This accomplishment is amplified by the fact that Oak Hill is one of only

two accelerated schools to earn this opportunity this year. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, this is no small feat.

Recently, I received a heartfelt email from Kelly McIntyre, the board chair of the school. She marveled at how God has guided the journey of everyone involved at Oak Hill and how along the way the right people and resources came together in perfect harmony.

Kelly, I agree with you wholeheartedly. God's hand has been in your work every step of the way.

Right now, nearly every single class at Oak Hill has a waiting list. Families are beyond enthusiastic at this opportunity for their children.

The outpouring of support from the surrounding community must also be recognized. Donations of furniture, school supplies, and other essential items continue to stream in on a weekly basis, and volunteers continue without delay to see projects through.

Madam Speaker, there is a quote from American anthropologist Margaret Mead that encapsulates the story of Oak Hill perfectly: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It is clear that these committed citizens are also working in the will of God. In Kelly's email to me, she remarked that, "It's the most amazing thing to see this mission that started as just a thought, a spark, grow into a force that I believe will be life-changing for many."

Madam Speaker, that sentiment is profound, and it is a direct reflection of the opportunity that charter schools provide across the country.

Parents, teachers, and communities recognize the value of charter schools because they challenge a failing status quo. Charter schools are guaranteed operational autonomy to provide rich alternatives to students and families. Most importantly, they provide educational freedom and choice, two fundamental principles that are desperately needed in education right now.

Instead of being held accountable to the education bureaucracy, charter schools are accountable to students, families, and their communities, as they should be, Madam Speaker.

Congratulations again to everyone at Oak Hill Charter School. The work you will undertake and the opportunities you will provide to our next generation of leaders in the coming months and years will be nothing short of spectacular.

May God continue to bless you in your mission of serving the Caldwell County community.

FARM BILL IMPACT SERIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, in preparation for reauthorizing the farm bill